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COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS ACTING AS
PREPARATORY BODY FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO THE
FIGHT AGAINST THE ILLICIT PRODUCTION,
SALE, DEMAND, TRAFFIC AND DISTRIBUTION
OF NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC
SUBSTANCES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES
Second session
Vienna, 16-20 March 1998
Agenda item 2 (b)*

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO CONSIDER THE FIGHT AGAINST THE ILLICIT PRODUCTION, SALE, DEMAND, TRAFFIC AND DISTRIBUTION OF NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES AND TO PROPOSE NEW STRATEGIES, METHODS, PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES AND SPECIFIC MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTS OF THE INFORMAL INTER-SESSIONAL MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION ACTING AS PREPARATORY BODY FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL

Draft Action Plan on International Cooperation on Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development

*The agenda for the session is contained in document E/CN.7/1998/PC/1.

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The General Assembly,

Reaffirming that the fight against illicit drugs must be pursued in accordance with the provisions of the international drug control treaties, on the basis of the principle of shared responsibility, following a comprehensive and balanced approach, and with full respect for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, international law, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of States and in full respect of human rights,

Recognizing that effective crop control strategies can include a variety of approaches, including alternative development, law enforcement and eradication,

Defining alternative development as a process to prevent and eliminate the illicit cultivation of plants containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances through specifically designed rural development measures in the context of sustained national economic growth and sustainable development efforts in countries taking action against drugs, recognizing the particular sociocultural characteristics of the target communities and groups, within the framework of a comprehensive and permanent solution to the problem of illicit drugs,

Recognizing that the problem of the illicit production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is often related to development problems and that those links require , within the context of shared responsibility, close cooperation among States, the competent organs of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, regional bodies and international financial institutions,

Aware that, in order to achieve maximum effectiveness in the fight against drug abuse, it is necessary to maintain a balanced approach by allocating appropriate resources to initiatives that include the reduction of both illicit demand and illicit supply,

Advocates the following objectives for strategies, programmes, and international cooperation to ensure the effectiveness of the common endeavour to reduce the illicit production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and to contribute to sustainable human development

I. THE NEED FOR A BALANCED APPROACH TO CONFRONT HIGH LEVELS OF ILLICIT CULTIVATION

Challenge

1. Despite the adoption of international conventions promoting the prohibition of illicit drug crops, the problem of the illicit cultivation of the opium poppy, the coca bush and the cannabis plant continues at alarming levels. History has shown that there is no single response to reducing and eliminating the cultivation and production of illicit drugs. Balanced approaches are likely to result in more efficient strategies and successful outcomes.

Action

2. States should strongly condemn, and urge community leaders to condemn, the illicit cultivation of the opium poppy, the coca bush and the cannabis plant, as well as other illicit drug crops.

3. States should ensure that the specific commitments of the Single Convention of 1961, 1/ as amended by the 1972 Protocol, 2/ and of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, 3/ regarding illicit drug crop cultivation are implemented and enforced. In particular, that includes article 14, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the 1988 Convention, which require Parties to take appropriate measures to prevent the illicit cultivation of plants containing narcotic and psychotropic substances and to cooperate to improve the effectiveness of eradication efforts, including their support to alternative development.

4. States in which illicit cultivation of drug crops exists should develop national strategies for the reduction and elimination of illicit crops, including concrete measurable goals and objectives taking into account existing drug control master plans. National drug crop reduction and elimination strategies should include comprehensive measures such as programmes in alternative development, law enforcement and eradication.

5. States should take appropriate measures to develop and implement national plans for alternative development, creating appropriate institutions, as well as a suitable legal, economic and social framework.

6. Alternative development programmes and projects should be consistent with national drug control policies and national sustainable development policies and strategies in the affected rural communities.

7. In cases of low-income production structures among peasants, alternative development is more sustainable and socially and economically more appropriate than forced eradication.

1/ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 520, No. 7515.

2/ Ibid, vol. 976, No. 14152.

3/ *Official Records of the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Vienna, 25 November-20 December 1988,* vol. I (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XI.5).

II. STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Challenge

8. Alternative development is an important component for generating and promoting lawful, viable and sustainable economic options to illicit drug crop cultivation and is one of the key components of the policy and programmes for reducing illicit drug production that has been adopted within the comprehensive framework of the global strategy of the United Nations. The development and implementation of alternative development is primarily the responsibility of the State in which illicit drug cultivation takes place. However, States with illicit drug crops will need continued funding, on the basis of shared responsibility, to support national efforts to eliminate drug crops. Currently, insufficient funding is available for alternative development at the national and international levels.

Action

9. The success of alternative development programmes depends on the long-term political and financial commitment of both the Governments of the affected countries and the international community, to support integrated rural development involving local communities, effective enforcement of drug control measures and promotion awareness among the local population of the negative consequences of drug abuse.

10. The international community and the relevant United Nations organizations, in particular the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, should assist States in countering illicit drug production by providing adequate financial and technical assistance for alternative development, with the objective of reducing and eliminating illicit drug crops. Such assistance should be provided within the context of the national control strategies of the recipient States. It should be linked to national commitment and the strong political will of States with illicit cultivation to implement the provisions contained in article 14 of the 1988 Convention.

11. Agencies of the United Nations system and relevant financial institutions should cooperate, within their spheres of competence, to support rural development for regions and populations affected by illicit crop cultivation.

12. International financial institutions and regional development banks should be encouraged to provide financial assistance for alternative development programmes.

13. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme should continue its catalytic role in regard to international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, relevant United Nations organizations and the private sector, and assist interested Governments in approaching such institutions for the purpose of financing and supporting their alternative development programmes and projects.

14. States are exhorted to agree on bilateral mechanisms for cooperation in order to establish and implement eradication and alternative development projects in their border areas.

15. The international community should attempt to provide greater access to domestic and international markets for alternative development products, with a view to overcoming problems relating to prices and marketing resulting from the substitution of crops cultivated for illicit purposes by productions for licit commercial purposes.

16. Alternative development programmes should be designed for areas that have a potential for adequate drug control and development.

III. IMPROVED AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Challenge

17. Alternative development is an important component of a balanced and comprehensive drug control strategy and is intended to create a supportive environment for the implementation of that strategy. It is intended to promote lawful and sustainable socio-economic options for these communities and population groups that have resorted to illicit cultivation as their only viable means of obtaining a livelihood, contributing in an integrated way to the eradication of poverty. However, cumulative efforts and methods of planning and implementation need further improvement to strengthen the existing processes and to implement new and innovative alternative development programmes.

Action

18. Alternative development programmes and international cooperation for that purpose should:

(a) Be adapted to the specific legal, social, economic, ecological and cultural conditions prevalent in a given project region;

(b) contribute to creating sustainable social and economic opportunities through integrated rural development including infrastructure development that will help to improve the living conditions of the communities and population groups affected by the existence of illicit cultivation;

(c) Contribute to the promotion of democratic values to encourage community participation, and should further social responsibility to develop a civic culture, that rejects the illicit cultivation of crops;

(d) Include appropriate demand reduction measures, where there is drug abuse in the targeted communities;

(e) Incorporate the gender dimension by ensuring equal conditions for women and men to participate in the development process including design and implementation;

(f) Observe environmental sustainability criteria, taking into account the objectives of Agenda 21. Programmes and projects of alternative development are efficient instruments used to avoid any expansion or displacement of illicit cultivation to ecologically fragile areas.

19. In order to ensure that alternative development is sustainable, participatory approaches that are based on dialogue and persuasion and that include the community as a whole, as well as relevant non-governmental organizations, should be applied in the identification, preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of alternative development. Local communities and public authorities should develop commonly agreed goals and objectives and commit themselves by community-based agreements to reduce illicit crops until they are eliminated.

20. Institution-building at the regional and local levels should be regarded as a factor that will contribute to improving the level of participation in activities fostered by alternative development.

21. States should design alternative development programmes taking into account the regional context. States should cooperate through bilateral, regional and multilateral means to avoid displacement of illicit cultivation from one area, region or country to another.

IV. ENHANCING MONITORING, EVALUATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

Challenge

22. States have often undertaken valiant efforts to eliminate the illicit cultivation of the opium poppy, the coca bush and the cannabis plant. Nevertheless, the potential of such efforts has not been fully exploited because of insufficient information and cooperation at policy and operational levels. Also, in recent years, the cultivation and production of illicit drug crops has appeared in other countries, reaching all geographical regions. That trend includes cultivation and production in enclosed premises using new methods and technologies.

Action

23. Governments in the producing areas should design efficient and accurate monitoring and verification mechanisms using the most efficient, cost-effective and accessible data collection methods available.

24. Governments should implement follow-up and evaluation systems that will enable them to monitor the qualitative and quantitative impact of alternative development programmes. The sustainability of illicit crop reduction is a most important assessment criterion of alternative development.

25. Governments should share information on illicit drug crop assessment with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and reciprocally with other Governments in order to increase

cooperation to eliminate such cultivation. Assessments should also include information about the causes and effects of narcotics production, including linkages to other development problems.

26. States in which the cultivation and production of illicit drug crops has developed in recent years should prepare estimates of the extent of the problems and exchange this information similarly. Those States should include these phenomena when formulating and implementing their national plans to tackle the problem of illicit drug crop cultivation and production.

V. THE NEED FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT IN CONTROLLING ILLICIT CROPS

Challenge

27. Even when alternative development projects are successful, some growers and processors are not likely to abandon production voluntarily simply because other opportunities already exist; they must see that there is a risk associated with staying in the illicit cultivation of drug crops.

Action

28. States with problems of illicit drug crop cultivation should ensure that alternative development programmes are complemented , when necessary, by law enforcement measures:

(a) Law enforcement measures are required as a necessary complement to alternative development programmes to tackle other illicit activities such as the operation of illicit drug laboratories, the diversion of precursors, trafficking, money-laundering and related forms of organized crime, both in areas where alternative development programmes are implemented and elsewhere along the trafficking chain;

(b) Comprehensive law enforcement programmes can affect the profitability of illicitly cultivated drug crops and, in so doing, make alternative sources of legal income more competitive and attractive.

29. Where there is organized criminal involvement in illicit drug crop cultivation and drug production, the measures such as eradication, destruction of illicit drug crops and arrests, called for in the 1961 Convention and the 1988 Convention, are particularly appropriate.

30. In areas where viable alternative sources of income already exist, law enforcement measures are required against persistent illicit cultivation of narcotic crops.

31. In areas where alternative development programmes have not yet created viable alternative income opportunities, the application of forced eradication might endanger the success of alternative development programmes.

32. Eradication efforts should utilize available research and ensure that environmentally safe methods are employed.

VI. FOLLOW-UP

33. We request the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to report to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as appropriate, taking into account the overall outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, on the follow-up of this Action Plan.